as a means of escape (Section 1).

The nature of the farmer's daily timetable depends on
(a) the type of farm-unit involved,
(b) the labour force available,
(c) location,
(d) season.

The farmer's day begins, on average, between 4 a.m. and 4.30 a.m. Extremes are found in the case of herdsmen who often rise much earlier - at 2.30 a.m. in the case of the Gomitan with a large herd of cows and only a limited milking labour force, or after 5a.m. or 5.30 a.m. for a herdsman whose farm is close to an M.M.U. collection depôt. The M.M.U. require herdsmen to deliver their milk at such a depôt for transportation to the pasteurizing centre at Hamrun or, in Gozo (after 1958), to the new milk centre at Xewkija. Before this latter addition to the milk industry, which is expected to cope with all the Gozo-produced milk in both pasteurizing and other processes, it was possible for a herdsman (Case I) in north-western Gozo to have to rise as early as 12.30 a.m. Generally, in the summer, reveille for the field worker might be an hour or so earlier than in winter so that he and, even more, the herdsman might expect to begin most of his working days in darkness.

The first event of the day for many country people is Mass. Some are regular attenders at one of the services between 4 and 6 a.m. Others, living further from a Church or having very heavy commitments of work, are less so. Field workers frequently take the Mass on their way to the work of the day (Case X).

Breakfast is invariably a very light meal of little more than bread and tea or coffee. It is taken sometime between reveille and about 9 a.m. and does not constitute a major halt in the work of the farm. Milk producers in most cases do not breakfast until the animals are milked or even until they return with their carts from taking the churns to the M.M.U. collection depôt in the nearest village.

The main meal of the day is lunch, taken somewhere between 10.30 a.m. and 12.30 p.m. and followed by a siesta of up to three hours. The herdsman's siesta is less flexible than that of the farmer for a 1 p.m. afternoon milking limits the time available. The milking over, the goat-herder takes his animals out to graze on a suitable patch of waste ground or stubble until 5 or 6 pm. - or later in the summer (Case II). The milk is taken to the collection depôt with minimum loss of time especially in hot weather. In the case of the herdsman with cows there is clearly no question of grazing these animals (Case VI), except in one case (Case IX).

except in one case (Case IX).

241 234 512 264 [262] The evening meal is generally smaller than the lunch although consisting of much the same elements - a thick stew ('brodu' or 'minestra'), along with bread, cheese, fruit, olives, tomatoes, etc. The consumption of meat and fish is in part governed by religion and in part by price and availability, though meat certainly figures much more prominently in the rural diet than formerly. The meal is taken soon after the return from the fields, about 6.30 p.m. and is followed, an hour or so later by the saying of a family Rosary before retiring for the night about 8.0 p.m. In Gozo there is a tendency for people to rise, eat, work and retire to bed rather earlier than in the larger Island and the smaller villages are usually dark and quiet by 7 p.m.

241 234 512 Apart, therefore, from external factors, such as M.M.U. collection or Church service timings, the daily timetable of the farmer and the herdsman depends to a large degree on his own volition. He knows what work is outstanding and can decide how and when he will do it within the limits imposed by the season, demands of animals, and so on. Thus, at a peak period of field-work, such as harvest, the farmer and his assistants may work on until the late evening - even through the night. During exceptionally heavy rains, as in October 1957, work on anything approaching the normal scale is, on the other hand, impossible and the farmer's day becomes one of doing what he can and complaining copiously meanwhile.

241 512 461 Midge (B/516, p.236), writing in 1840, was impressed by the regular and assiduous labour of the Maltese farmer, even during the heat of the summer sun. "Il semble impossible, au premier abord, que le paysan maltais puisse résister aux chaleurs intenses de l'été. Cependant, au milieu des champs, dès le lever du soleil, on le voit, exposés a ses brûlants rayons, continuer tout le jour ses pénibles travaux. Il fait deux pauses: la première a huit heures; il se repose alors une demi-heure pour déjeuner; la seconde à onze heures; c'est l'instant de son dîner frugal, après lequel il se repose de nouveau jusqu'à midi en hiver, et jusqu'à une heure en été, tantôt à l'ombre d'un figuier, tantôt au pied du petit mur qui entoure le champ, la tête couverte d'un bonnet de laine, et le reste du corps exposé au feux du jour. Il reprend ensuite ses travaux avec la même vigueur, et ne se retire qu'au signal donné par la cloche de son village, c'est à dire au coucher du soleil".

572 241 234 178 The essentials of the daily round of the farmer have changed little since Midge wrote except in so far as the tremendous increase in the importance of stock-rearing and

*159 46 work of the farm and animals himself", and he can only cope with his own farm and animals if he follows a heavy and rigidly organized schedule of work. Hired labour is not a proposition, Pawlu avers, at £1 for an eight-hour day and this has apparently contributed to the emphasis which he has put on fodder and milk production in recent years. [433] High costs of hired labour for field-work together with the poor and ungurranteed returns for crop produce make field work on dry (baghli) land a poor prospect. Irrigable land presents a different picture but there is none available in Pawlu's district.

*159 512 Pawlu's timetable (in effect he runs the farm single-handed) centres on the animals. During the summer months the pressure is slightly less because the weather is easier, field-work is less pressing and he has the casual help of the younger children in school vacations. Daily time of rising for Pawlu depends on where and when the milk has to be taken for collection. At one stage, in 1957, he had to be up soon after midnight but, until the new milk factory was opened at Xewkija in 1958, a more usual reveille was at 2 or 3 a.m.

[264] [262] Breakfast, of coffee and bread, is taken when the family gets up or when they return from the Church nearby. Pawlu often has to take meals when he can fit them in between his jobs so that it is somewhat exceptional to find the whole family sitting together for food. The morning milking takes him some two hours after which the animals need feeding and attention before he can go to the fields. About six times a month his morning takes him to Rabat or shopping or business errands.

[264] [262] Lunch, the main meal of the day, consists every day of either minestra (thick soup) or farinaceous paste of some kind, together with bread, cheese, oil (żejt) and home-made tomato 'kunserva'. Lunch is usually over by noon when milking and the preparation of the afternoon feed begins.

[264] The evening meal is normally similar to the lunch in content but less in amount. It is often taken immediately before retirement for the night which is early in the village. The farmer reckons to be in from the fields by sun-down but, when the evenings are longer, most of the village is quiet soon after 6 p.m. except where some conversation lingers in a paraffin-lit shop.

*159 512 794 Sundays and festa days are breaks from the normal routine, but Church-going is not confined to these days and in fact accounts for some two half-hour visits every day with extra attendances at the weekend. In this very rural community the 'social' aspect of church-going retains most of its traditional importance. In the absence of

159 days people fasted full forty days" (Ġanri); (ii) the Friday 262 Fast - it is forbidden to eat meat on Fridays and preferable 785 to avoid it on Wednesdays also; and (iii) Special Fasts. These include the 'Change of Season' fasts and a variety of Saints' Days, special personal observances and certain occasional fasts designated by the Church authorities. The emphasis is on self-denial in all fasts. Meat, confectionary and 'extra' items are strictly avoided, and the quantity of permitted foods is also reduced. Nothing is eaten between the frugal meals.

159 The timing of meals throughout the day is variable in 262 Ġanri's family. Rarely does he sit down to table with his 264 wife and children, whose routine has to accommodate school time-tables, etc. On non-fast days breakfast consists of bread and coffee. Lunch is taken about noon - or an hour or so earlier on fast-days. If he is working in the fields Ġanri may have a loaf of bread, with oil, cheese, figs, olives, chickpeas and corn beef or some fish, or some cooked meal may be brought out to him by one of the women or girls. Sweet black coffee or home-made wine are the staple drinks, and the meal is normally followed by a siesta of at least one hour. The time of the evening meal depends on the nature and pressure of work in hand and consists of a stew (especially where the lunch had been a cold meal in the fields). [261] At all times food is used carefully. It is never wasted. Even produce of the farm such as eggs are "only given to the boys occasionally" (Ġanri).

198 The proportion of food purchased is now much greater 291 than even a generation ago in this type of family. The same 443 is true of clothing. Clothing has changed very considerably [432] both in style and variety since Ġanri's father was a young [294] farmer when half the people in the village had looms and many had spinning wheels to produce cotton garments for the family or other villagers. The old style of dress of the farmer consisted of knee-length, white cotton trousers, a thick woollen vest, waistcoat and cummerbund. The locally produced sheep's wool vest has been largely replaced by army surplus types of shirts. Garments of Maltese cotton and wool are now rarely seen except on the oldest men, who have been wearing them since they were much younger. The use of army surplus clothing has become very common since 1945 and the travelling drapers' vans, local shops and the Sunday markets (Valletta and Rabat) now do a considerable trade in both made up garments and materials of this type.

291 With the increasing contact between town and country 369 the farmer has come to want smarter suits for his brief 178 leisure hours. The younger generation of countryfolk no longer venture to the capital unless they are dressed like townsmen - suit, tie, shoes and so on. This increase in the

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
EZ6 Malta EZ6

In the afternoon of the Feast, the great harbour and the several creeks, especially that of Calcara, present indeed a very lively appearance. Yachts, boats, and small crafts plough the deep, the greater part sailing, with flags and streamers flying in the breeze, laden with people, mostly clad in gay summer costumes, which they put on for the first time on this day as a sign of the approaching hot season.

Some of these gay parties keep on their crafts, singing and playing guitars and melodeons, whilst others disembark on some shady rock on the sea-shore, where they spread their table-cloths and sit down to enjoy the edibles which they bring with them.

A little after sunset, when the numerous and jolly picnic parties have emptied some bottles of wine, the boats

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
EZ6 Malta EZ6

Cathedral Church of Notabile on the eve of the said festival.

On the morning of the feast—as soon as the procession, which is led by the Bishop, enters the Cathedral Church—large crowds, especially of country people in their substantial holiday finery, and wearing their hoarded ornaments of massive gold, drive at a racing speed to Boschetto, where, careless of the excessive heat of a broiling sun, they divide into companies and under the shades of the leafy orange trees in the beautiful garden, they seem quite happy in eating their sumptuous dinners, consisting chiefly of stewed rabbit, ham, pies, cheese and an allowance of common wine, which they keep in large dark glass bottles, or in tin cans where the indispensable liquid is less liable to being spilt.

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
EZ6 Malta EZ6

or trumpets. Before the corpse was 000 764 824
interred, a pillow filled with orange and
laurel leaves (*) was placed under the
head, and a carpet spread over the tomb,
which was suffered to remain some
days, to show that during that time it
was forbidden to walk over it.

No fire was lighted for three days in 765 372 264
the kitchen of the deceased, and either
one of the relations or some most inti-
mate friend sent a dinner to the inha-
bitants of the house, which they ate
cross-legged on the floor.

Women on this occasion remained 765 302
forty days in the house, but men went
out on the seventh day, with their faces
unshaven. (†)

(*) Orange trees were regarded by the Pagans as expiatory.

(†) Mourning among the ancients was expressed by very different signs; such as by rending of garments, wearing sack cloth, laying aside crowns &c. Thus Plutarch, in his life of Cato, relates, that from the time of his leaving the city with Pompey, he neither shaved his head, nor, as usual, wore his crown or garland.

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
EZ6 Malta EZ6

NEW YEAR'S SUPERSTITIONS

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A superstitious dread still attaches to some one of the family keeping absent at dinner time on New Year's day. He who doesn't dine with his family on New Year's day is expected to die at the end of that same year.

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He who eats hotch-potch soup on New year's day is to gnaw the ham bones all the rest of the year.

Those who eat cabbages on New year's day groan for a whole year.

OIL, SALT AND WINE

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The spilling of oil is considered a very unlucky omen by the Maltese. The spilling of salt or wine, however, betokens good luck.

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
EZ6 Malta EZ6

THROWING STONES IN A WELL

Our ancestors made children believe that if they threw stones in a well or into the sea they had to lift them up some day with their eyelashes. 787 823

THIRTEEN AT TABLE

Sitting down thirteen to dinner is considered very unlucky. 777 264 763

The notion is that one of the thirteen will die within the next twenty four hours. The origin popularly assigned to this widespread superstition is the fact that thirteen was the number at the Last Supper, Judas being the thirteenth.

SNEEZING

The custom of saying "Evviva" or "Sahha" to one who happens to sneeze 827

5: Cremona B-3, 4 (no date) 1923
EZ6 Malta EZ6

the early morning to hear mass. In old times such seclusion was much more strictly observed, and the period was never less than forty days. For men this sort of mourning did not exceed seven days, and is now generally limited to three days, after the funeral.

III. Old custom prohibited cooking for three days, and the family of the deceased was provided with meals by friends or distant relatives. This rule was, and perhaps is still, followed in some districts of Sicily and amongst Arab tribes of Northern Africa. While meals were being served the bereaved family sat with folded legs on the floor, which was covered with a straw mat. The historian Ciantar relates in 1772 that these mourning dinners still took place in his early days. This custom has now been discontinued, and our village people merely abstain from having their pastry and other food prepared in a public oven for a period of some months after the death of a member of the family.

IV. Men often do not shave for a fortnight or even a month. This practice was more in favour in old times. Middle and lower class people keep away from *festas*, and the higher class from theatres, dancing, and merrymakings.

V. People of rank wear a mourning dress for a few days following a death in their family, but country people are satisfied with wearing a black felt hat and a dark sash round the waist. Women, if wives or brides, follow the continental style of full mourning dress in crape. Some women do not wear a hat or bonnet during the first week of mourning, and go out in *faldettas*, a national head-covering which is more commonly used when attending religious services. Since the seventeenth century the Maltese *faldetta* has undergone some changes in shape and material. The old *faldetta*, as described by Ciantar, was a black veil or cowl covering the head and reaching to the heels, like the Arab and Sicilian women's trailing mantles. Apparently countrywomen wore a blue linen veil, which is still adopted, for economy's sake, in some of the eastern seaside hamlets of the island, but amongst the lower class in general the black hood, which matrons changed into silk with lace edges, was more common. Bombazine (without lace) or silk *faldettas* are now